

Message Text

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ACTION AID-59

INFO OCT-01 AF-05 ISO-00 IO-03 SWF-02 EB-05 IGA-02 AGR-03

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P R 031245Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU
TO AMEMBASSY NIAMEY PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
SECSTATE WASHDC 6236

UNCLAS COTONOU 0851

AFDROUGHT

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, DM, NG

SUBJECT: CONGESTION IN PARAKOU

REF: NIAMEY 1732

1. PROBLEM OF CONGESTION IN PARAKOU CONTINUES PLUG
WHOLE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM TO NIGER. DANISH VOLUN-
TEER WORKING FOR WFP, WHO PRESENTLY AT PARAKOU, REPORTS STOCK
OF 3,000 MT WHICH CONTINUE GROW BY 20 MT DAILY. WHILE IT TRUE
THAT MORE TRUCKS ARE ARRIVING AT PARAKOU FOR LOADING,
MOST OF THESE VEHICLES ARE SMALLER THAN LARGE
20-25 TON TRAILER TRUCKS USUALLY USED FOR THIS
TRAFFIC. THUS, CONGESTION ACTUALLY IS WORSENING
WITH SOME 1,700 MT IN UNLOADED RAILWAY WAGONS.
GLATTE, ON MAY 31, OBSERVED WAGONS WHICH WERE
LOADED MAY 21 AT COTONOU ON SIDING IN PARAKOU STILL
FULL OF GRAIN.

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2. TODAN'S OPTIMISM (REFTEL) OBVIOUSLY UNWARRANTED. PARAKOU CONTINUES SHIP LESS THAN IS ARRIVING. TO REVERSE PROCESS, AT LEAST 40 LARGE TRUCKS PER DAY WOULD BE REQUIRED. OVER PAST TWO WEEKS, AVERAGE OF 20 TRUCKS PER DAY HAVE LEFT PARAKOU. SINCE AVERAGE TRUCK CARRIES ABOUT 20 MT, SOMEWHAT LESS THAN 400 MT HAS BEEN EVACUATED PER DAY.

3. DO REGO TOLD ME JUNE 1 THAT OCDN HAS ASKED NIGER GOVERNMENT TO INDUCE NIGERIAN TRUCKERS TO COME TO PARAKOU. AS FAR AS WE ARE AWARE, NONE HAVE YET APPEARED. ALSO, OCDN HAS BROADCAST APPEALS ON RADIO DAHOMEY ASKING ALL DAHOMEAN TRUCKERS TO JOIN PARAKOU-NIGER LIFT. THIS LAST EFFORT HAS ENJOYED ONLY LIMITED SUCCESS AS THERE ARE FEW PRIVATELY OWNED TRUCKS IN DAHOMEY OF LARGE CAPACITY.

4. RDO/NIAMEY MUST PRESS GON TO ASSURE MORE TRUCKS ARE SENT TO PARAKOU. OTHERWISE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM WILL CONTINUE TO CHOKES ITSELF WITH RESULT THAT FAR LESS GRAIN WILL ARRIVE AT DISTRIBUTION POINTS PRIOR TO BEGINNING HEAVY RAINS.

5. ANOTHER POINT WHICH SHOULD BE RAISED WITH GON AUTHORITIES IS TRUCK DRIVER REPORTS OF SHORTAGE OF LABOR TO UNLOAD TRUCKS AT NIAMEY, TAHOUA, ZINDER, MARADI. ACCORDING THEIR STORIES, THERE IS TRADITIONAL RESISTANCE BY NOMADS TO MANUAL LABOR. ALSO, MANY MEN WHO USUALLY DO SUCH WORK HAVE MIGRATED TEMPORARILY TO NORTHERN NIGERIA TO WORK ON PEANUT HARVEST. AS RESULT, TRUCKS ARE BEING DELAYED UNNECESSARILY BY 1-2 DAYS. FURTHER FACTOR IN UNUSUALLY LONG TURN-AROUND TIME IS CUSTOM OF UNSUPERVISED TRUCK DRIVERS TO SPEND INORDINATE AMOUNT OF TIME ENJOYING PLEASURES OF PARAKOU RATHER THAN GETTING ON ROAD. NIGERIAN GOV'T SHOULD BE ASKED PRESS TRUCK OWNERS TO INSIST ON BETTER PERFORMANCE FROM DRIVERS.

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